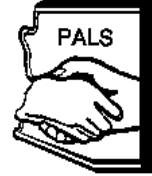




INFORMATION SHEET

Parent Information Network



Autism

What is Autism?

According to the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) § 15-761 (1), "'Autism' means a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction and that adversely affects educational performance. Characteristics include irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not include children with characteristics of emotional disability..."

Autism disorder is one of the disabilities specifically defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA '04), the federal legislation under which children and youth with disabilities receive special education and related services.

IDEA, which uses the term "autism," defines the disorder as "a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. This disability can block, delay or distort signals from the eyes, the ears, and other sensory organs. The cause of autism is still unknown.

How Common is Autism?

In the 2004-2005 school year, 2,872 students were classified as having autism and received special education services. This number represents 0.27% of the 1,053,506 children enrolled in Arizona public schools as of October 1, 2004 and accounts for 2.40% of the total special education population.

What Effect Does Autism Have on a Child?

There may be no noticeable physical signs of autism. What *is* noticeable is the presence of uneven developmental abilities and scattered strengths and weaknesses. Intelligence tests are unreliable for people with autism since they are generally used to

measure performance in people who have typical vision, hearing, and forms of experience. The tests may not measure extraordinary perception. Some skills in people with autism are normal, or even superior for their age, and others show significant delay.

An important part of the evaluation process is consideration of assistive technology (AT) services. AT can include a wide range of services from low-technology devices to high-technology items such as communication boards or computers.

Three areas of concern are social interaction, communication, and lack of speech development. Children may not use or understand non-verbal communication. They may have a significant delay in, or a lack of speech development. And, their behavior and interests may seem restricted and repetitive.

Research shows that individuals with autism can progress considerably with adapted teaching strategies. Daily instruction should be consistent and predictable. Verbal instruction as well as printed materials, help the student with autism learn better. A well developed educational program is one that provides learning experiences that can be used at school, at home and in the community.

Lifelong services and support systems must be available for persons with autism and their families. Exploring local, regional and national resources will help develop a network of information and services.

References

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National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (2004). *Autism and pervasive*

developmental disorder, fact sheet #1.
Washington, DC: NICHCY.

Cure Autism Now (2005). CAN Foundation, 5455 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 323-549-0500, 888-8-autism, www.cureautismnow.org

Resources

Books

Bondy, A., & Frost, L. (2001). *A picture's worth: PECS and other visual communication strategies in autism*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House. www.woodbinehouse.com

Kranowitz, C.S. (2002). *The out-of-sync child: Recognizing and coping with sensory integration dysfunction*. NY: Perigee.

Nasseff, R., (2001). *Special children, challenged parents: The struggles and rewards of raising a child with a disability*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing. www.pbrookes.com

Neisworth, J.T., & Wolfe, P.S. Editors. (2004). *The autism encyclopedia*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing. www.pbrookes.com

Powers, Michael D. (1999). *Children with autism*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House. www.woodbinehouse.com

Video Tapes

Videotapes and training materials catalog. Child Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 286, Van Nuys, CA 91401, 800-405-8942, www.ChildDevelopmentMedia.com

Video library bibliography. Continuing Education Programs of America, Media Publications Division, P.O. Box 52, Peoria, IL 61650, 309-263-0310, www.cepauniversity.com

Video and book lending library bibliography. Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central, Ste. 200, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-242-4366, 800-237-3007, www.raisingpecialkids.org

Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

Arc of Arizona, Inc., The, 5610 S. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85040, 602-243-1787, 800-252-9054, www.arcarizona.org/

AZ DES/Division of Developmental Disabilities, 1789 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-0419, 800-352-4558, www.de.state.az.us/ddd

Autism Society of America, Greater Phoenix Chapter, P. O. Box 10543, Phoenix, AZ 85064-0543, 480-940-1093, www.phxautism.org
Pima Co. Chapter, 1830 E. Broadway, Ste. 124, Tucson, AZ 85719-5964, 520-573-7325, www.autism-society.org

Division TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children), 310 Medical School Wing E, University of North Carolina-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7180, 919-966-2174, www.unc.edu/depts/teacch/mainpage.htm

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN), www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Autism Information Center, 404-498-3800, www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/default.htm

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013, 800-695-0285, www.nichcy.org

Parent Information Network, ADE/ESS, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-3852, www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, 2600 N. Wyatt, Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-324-3150, www.pilotparents.org

Southwest Autism Research Center, 300 N. 18th

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